5778

TWO SERMONS,

The One urging

The Neceſſity of Receiving,

And the other Anſwering all

The Excuſes for not Receiving

THE

LORD'S-SUPPER.

Publiſhed at the Requeſt of a Religious SOCIETY, as Proper to be Given away in particular Pariſhes, where the Sin of *Non-Communicating* is ſo General and apparently Obſtructing a *Reformation of Manners.*

By *PETER NEWCOME*, M. A.
Vicar of *Aldenham* in *Hertfordſhire.*

The Second Edition, Reviewed.

LONDON,
Printed by *J. Leake*, for *John Wyat* at the *Roſe* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1701.
Price Three Pence, or 20*s.* an Hundred.

BRITISH MUSEUM

SERMON the First;

THE Neceſſity of Receiving THE LORD'S-SUPPER.

1 COR. xi. 24.

——*This do in Remembrance of me.*

AMONG the many Complaints made by the more Conſiderate and Sober Chriſtians againſt the *Neglect of Duty*; we find none more *Common*, nor indeed more *Juſt* than thoſe made againſt the Neglect of what is ſo expreſly enjoyn'd in the *Text*, the Conſtant Receiving of the *Lord's-Supper*. A peculiar and unaccountable Obſtinacy generally prevailing againſt this Ordinance. Inſomuch that many continuing in a fair *Communion* with the *Church*, in all other reſpects and parts of the eſtabliſhed *Publick Worſhip*, do ſeldom or never frequent this, towards which they are eſtranged with the *Indifferency* or *Averſeneſs* becoming the moſt *Arbitrary*, or *Unreaſonable* Practice; as if there was nothing of *Duty* or *Advantage* in the Ordinance; but that every Man was left to his own *Freedom*, and it were the *Wiſeſt Choice* not to meddle therewith.

To Correct this Error, and to endeavour to reduce Men's Minds to a better temper, I intend now to diſplay the *Neceſſity* of Mens Receiving this Sacrament, imply'd in theſe words of our Lord, quoted by St. *Paul* in the *Text*; which being ſo very Expreſſive of the Obligatorineſs of the *Command*, inferr or imply Arguments peculiarly *Perſwaſive* to an Obſervance, and *Diſſuaſive* from a ſinful Omiſſion thereof. This being Enacted moſt *Abſolutely*. Upon the ſole *Authority* of our Saviour. As his *laſt and dying* Injunction. For which he hath expreſs'd a very *Particular Concern*. Wherein he hath ſhew'd himſelf very *Tender* of, and *Gracious* towards us. A Non-obſervance whereof greatly aggravates *Guilt*, and juſtly expoſes to the utmoſt *Puniſhment*. All which things being duly explain'd, cannot amount to leſs than a Demonſtration of the *Neceſſity* of conſtantly Receiving the *Lord's-Supper*, and of the Unreaſonableneſs of Omitting it. For,

I. *This Command to do it is Abſolute*, without Limitation or Exception; whereby *All* are obliged, and Liberty or Choice left to *None* to refuſe it. And as our *Saviour* did not ſay, *Ye may do this* if you pleaſe, ſo neither did he mean that the *Apoſtles* to whom he gave this *Command*, ſhould alone be obliged by it; they being the Repreſentatives of the whole *Church*, and St. *Paul* here repeating and applying it to the *Corinthians* alſo; with whom all *Chriſtians* in all ſucceeding Ages are comprehended. All therefore that are of the *Church* of *Chriſt*, who profeſs themſelves his *Diſciples*, who deſire and hope for Salvation by his Sufferings and Death, are here ſpoke to, and Poſitively obliged to *Do this*; which therefore ought to lie as cloſe upon every Man's Conſcience, as any other Command of the *Goſpel* whatſoever. None being more *Abſolutely* expreſſed, nor thereby more intimated to be *Neceſſary* to be kept. He that Supinely and wilfully ventures to thwart

thwart the Divine Will in this Inſtance, may as reaſonably oppoſe it in any other; having as much Liberty to be a *Drunkard* or *Whoremonger*, or *Murderer*, as an obſtinate *Non-Communicant*; and as much reaſon to expect to be ſaved in any of *Thoſe*, as in *This Sin*; all bearing the Guilt of *Diſobedience* to a Divine Command, and only differing in ſome *Degree*, or *Kind*, and, it may be, having not more *Hainous Aggravations*, and liable to the ſame *Condemnation*. For God is angry at one Sin as well as another; and his Will is no leſs violated by *not doing a Command*, than by *doing what is Forbidden*; neither is there any Sin more poſitively and abſolutely forbid, than this Duty is commanded; the Breach therefore whereof ought to be as much ſhun'd and dreaded, becauſe, alſo,

II. *This Command is grounded purely on the Authority of Chriſt*; which implies *a double Obligation* very peculiarly obliging our Obedience to it.

1. *Becauſe it is Enacted upon the Authority of Chriſt*. Who hath merited our *beſt* and *utmoſt* Services; having *Done* and *Suffered* infinitely more for our *Sakes* and *Intereſt*, than what he requires from us, or we can *Do* and *Suffer* for him. Whom to requite and oblige, common *Gratitude* and *Ingenuity* ſhould ſuffer us to ſtick at nothing; ſince every thing we have or hope for, is owing to his *Bounty*, and purchaſed at his *Coſt* for us. If ſuch a Friend, upon ſo hard Terms cannot gain upon our Compliance with his Will; what will move Wretches ſo ingrateful? or whom ſhall we not deny, *Denying* herein *the Lord that bought us?* 2 Pet. 2. 1. So endeared and inforced is this *Command*, by the *Authority* it is Enacted upon; whereby we are *Neceſſitated* to a conſtant Receiving of the *Lord's-Supper*, upon this account peculiar to it, inhancing the Obligatorineſs of the Duty. And that too,

2. *Because it is Enacted only upon Christ's Authority.* Having nothing else to recommend or urge its Observance. Wherein Conscience is no way, upon any other account concerned. Which therefore, is a Duty peculiar to *Christians*, and the only sure Test of their Sincerity and Love to their *Saviour*. For as for the Duties of *Temperance*, *Justice*, *Gratitude*, *Humility*, *Charity*, *Prayer* to God and the like; though our *Saviour* also injoyn'd these, yet is he not *Alone* herein, these being Duties of a long time taught before he came, to the *Jews* by *Moses* and the *Prophets*, and to the *Gentile* World by the *Light of Nature*, and *Dictate of Conscience*; whereby he had an open and ready way made for his re-establishing, and inculcating such Precepts with utmost Improvements; their Reception being made easie by Men's own Dispositions. But in this Command of the *Lord's Supper Christ* evidently stands alone. Whereof *Natural Reason* knows nothing, and to which no Man's *Conscience* will oblige him, but that of a *Christian*. And this seems to be the Chief, if not the only Reason, why the *Sin* of its *Omission*, is so generally committed (as we see it is) with less Horror and Regret than any other the most Notorious Villanies whatsoever. For it is not because there is less of *Sin*, but because there is no *Light of Nature* to discover the Obligation of *Duty* therein; neither is there any Motive to it but the Sense of our *Allegiance* and *Love* to the Authority of *Christ*. Compliance is also due to it purely for his Sake; and which is the strongest Bond upon all that *Love the Lord Jesus* to observe it, and the most favourable opportunity of approving Obedience to him. Nor indeed is there any other Instance thereof, whereby Sincerity can be so infallibly and acceptably testified; so that the *Neglect* or *Omission* of this Duty cannot imply less than *Disregard* to the *Person*, and *Disloyalty* to the *Authority* of Christ, whose *Command* it is;

is; and for whoſe Sake we are bound to obſerve it, Eſpecially, ſince further,

III. *This was the laſt and Dying Command of Chriſt.* Deliver'd by him but the very Night before he Suffered, and *in the ſame Night* (as it is expreſly noted before the *Text*) *in which he was betrayed*, when he had the certain Proſpect of Death in his Eyes. In a Seaſon, when Men are generally wont to be moſt *Sincere* and *Serious* in uttering moſt *weighty* and *needful* Advice; which commands both Attention and Credit; and is uſually receiv'd and reverenc'd, as the moſt Sacred Relicks, to be religiouſly laid up and regarded for ever after. Nothing being eſteemed more Barbarous than to ſlight or refuſe to *Do*, unleſs it be ſomething very Difficult and Unreaſonable, what a dying *Man*, much more a dying *Friend* hath *Deſired*; yea, (having *Authority* alſo) hath Poſitively *Commanded*. So that the very *timing* of this *Command* is a peculiar Recommendation of the *Inſtitution*, and a powerful Motive to its Obſervance: And of all *dying Men*, our *Saviour* will ſeem to have expreſs'd his Good-Will to the leaſt good Purpoſe and Effect, to thoſe who ſet at naught and will not be concluded by this his *Laſt Will* concerning them; ſo ill requiting his *Dying Love*, as not to obey his *Dying Command*.

IV. *For this alſo, Chriſt hath ſeemed to expreſs a very Particular Concern*; repeating his Mind, and ſignifying his Deſire of Eſtabliſhing it even after his *Glorification*; and delivering a Charge concerning it, not only from amidſt his *Agonies* on Earth, but from amidſt his *Triumphs* in Heaven. Neither the extremity of *Sorrows*, nor the height of *Joys* diverting or abating his Care for his *Church* herein; who, (however ſlight ſome are pleaſed to account of this Sacred *Rite*,) deemed its *Command* ſo very material, that when our *Apoſtle* received his Commiſſion immediately from him, when he was miraculouſly called to

preach the Goſpel, it was by Name, in the moſt punctual and ſolemn manner inſerted and ſpecified, ſo as no other particular Part of his Office ſeems to have been. *I have* (ſaith St. *Paul* before the *Text*) *received of the Lord* [even by an extraordinary Revelation] *that which I alſo delivered unto you* [as from him] namely, *That the Lord Jeſus the ſame Night in which he was betrayed, took Bread*, &c.---*And ſaid*--*This Do in Remembrance of me*: Hereby intimating the *Inſtitution* to be an Eſſential part of *Chriſtianity*, which is neither truly propagated, nor eſtabliſhed where this is not duly Practiſed; and which, therefore, above all other Injunctions, deſerves an extraordinary Recommendation, and muſt neceſſarily require a very ſingular Regard, if the ſame *Mind be in* us, *which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. 2. 5. whoſe Eſteem and Concern ought to command our Opinion and Practice in Deference and Conformity to himſelf herein.

V. *Herein further Chriſt hath ſhewed himſelf very Tender and Gracious towards us.* To *Do this* is very *Eaſie* and *Honourable*: To *Do* it *in Remembrance of Chriſt*, by way of *Commemoration* is *Religious*, and by way of *Covenanting* is very *Beneficial*.

1. *To Do this is a very eaſie Command of Chriſt.* It is neither *Troubleſome* nor *Coſtly*, *Tedious* nor *Laborious*. It is nothing to the numerous expenſive Ceremonies and Inſtitutions of the *Jewiſh* Worſhip put an end to hereby, *which neither they, nor their Fathers were able to bear*, Acts 15. 10. It is nothing to the Barbarities many *Heathens* ſubmit to in their Idolatrous Worſhip of the *Devil*. It is nothing to what we owe, and *Chriſt* might juſtly have required from us in return for what he hath done and ſuffered for Us. Yea, it is nothing of more Hardſhip, than we could reaſonably deſire to have choſen our ſelves; leſs than which, they that would *Do* any thing, could not contrive to *Do*, to ſuch important

portant Ends, and ſo advantageous Purpoſes. And therefore not to *Do* this in Obedience to *Chriſt*, is the height of Diſobedience, in contempt of *Chriſtian Liberty*, and of that Love which purchas'd it at ſo dear a rate for us. This moreover,

2. *Is Honourable to us.* It Invites us as *Chriſt*'s own Gueſts to his Table, and there treats us as his Friends and Confidents with Heavenly Food and Welcome. Which is a Dignity not to have been expected, or aſpired after by Man, without God's own contrivance and offer thereof to him; and which to refuſe, being the Favour of one infinitely above us, is not Humility but Pride in ſuch his Inferiours. Neither can it become Man, thirſting after Honour from the World, to deſpiſe it being proffered from Heaven; or when God condeſcends, to grow haughty and regardleſs. However.

3. *To Do this is Religious.* It is a Sacrifice of *Prayer* and *Thankſgiving* to God, and to our *Saviour* in Commemoration of the Love and Mercy of our Redemption. We *Praiſe* God hereby for his great and unexpreſſible Goodneſs, in ſending his Son into the world to be an Expiation for our Sins, and *Plead* before him the vertue and merit hereof for our Pardon and Acceptance. By it we aſcribe to *Chriſt* the Honour thereof with Joy and Thankfulneſs to his Memory, in Teſtimony of our Faith and Hope, and Truſt in him, as our Lord and Saviour, being neither aſham'd of his Croſs, nor afraid of any Sufferings for his Sake. By it we expreſs in viſible Signs, what we think our ſelves bound to do in Words and Actions, even all the parts of publick *Chriſtian Worſhip*, which would be very lame and imperfect without it. And therefore, the *Inſtitution* of our *Saviour* does not confine a *Chriſtians Doing this* to any fix'd and ſettled times, becauſe it is what may be expected from them in all their publick Religious Aſſemblies, whenever they meet together to worſhip God

God and their Saviour. And ſo the *Apoſtles*, and *Primitive Chriſtians* are obſerved to have Practis'd; which nothing but the Degeneracy of the Age, the decay of Chriſtian Piety, and that little Senſe Men have of the neceſſity and advantages of this Duty hath broke off and doth ſtill obſtruct. And therefore in *Doing this* we are by *Chriſt* only required and directed to *Chriſtian Worſhip*; whereby our *Prayers* and *Praiſes*, and the other parts of our *Publick Worſhip* may be rendred Efficacious and acceptable, through the recommendation of that *Expiatory Sacrifice*, applied by this Inſtitution of our *Saviour*'s under the *Goſpel*, as the Offering of *Sacrifices* was under the Law: To whoſe Direction for Divine Worſhip, it becomes and behoves us to ſubmit, ſince he beſt knows what will pleaſe God, and is due to himſelf herein. Eſpecially ſeeing, alſo, that,

4. *This is Beneficial*, by way of *Covenanting* with God hereby, in order to partake in the Benefits and Bleſſings, which *Chriſt* hath purchaſed by his Death, in his own appointed way, Sacramentally conveyed in theſe Symbols and Signs of his Body and Blood. So that we are obliged to the Obſervance hereof out of pure Conſcience and Safety to our Souls; as neceſſary to ſupport that Spiritual Life begun in *Baptiſm*, and to repair the Decays of Grace, that we may grow and increaſe in Holineſs, *more and more until we come unto* the *Everlaſting Kingdom*. For to this end not only the more Remote and accidental advantages of *Preparation* are Themſelves very conſiderable Improvements for the ſecurity of our Spiritual State, for as much as they oblige us to *Recollection*, Fix indefinite Purpoſes to *conſider our ways*, (that might otherwiſe be endleſly deferr'd,) and hereby check our Career in Sin; but alſo the intrinſick *Benefits* of the *Celebration* of the Ordinance it ſelf, are much more Efficacious Helps againſt all Aſſaults

Assaults of Spiritual Enemies from without, and the Remedy of all the Maladies of the Soul within: *Our Souls being* [*strengthned and refreshed by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our Bodies are by the Bread and Wine.*] New Vigour is instill'd into our weak and languishing Souls, by the immortal Food duly received in the Holy Eucharist. All the habits of *Faith* are increased and exercised hereby, and a solemn Profession thereof made herein, not only binds it more strongly on the Soul, but engageth the Divine Blessing to *help Unbelief*. This Ordinance excites and urges *Repentance*, from the malignity of Sin represented in our Lord's Sufferings, and by the freest Mercy for Sinners remembred in his Atonement. It applies and confirms the *Remission of Sins*; whereof this *Sacrament* is a Sign and Pledge; and obliges moreover to a very particular Forgiveness of all our Enemies, which is the very Condition upon which our own Forgiveness depends. It ties our *Union with Christ* faster and closer. It distributes Sacramental Pledges of his Love. It admits us not only to eat at his Table, but to feed on his Body in that Spiritual manner they are exhibited to us in this *Sacrament* of his own Institution. It Excites the Grace of *Charity* and *Love*, both towards God, and towards one another; by all the Engagements of Love herein remembred, and set before us. It advances and enlivens *Hope*, by the Sealing and assuring the *Covenant* of Mercy and Forgiveness hereby to us. It Heightens a Christian's *Joy*, and *Comfort* in the transporting Embraces of our dearest Lord, and in the Exercise of raised and refined Devotion, which is *the Peace of God that passeth all Understanding*. It Administers to every well-disposed Soul, the *Pledge and Foretaste of future Glory*, which is the Blessing of the breaking of Christ's *Body*, and shedding of his *Blood* procured for, and applied to us. In a word; this Feast is *to us* whatever we need, *Wisdom, Righteousness*,

ouſneſs, Sanctification and Redemption; poſſeſſing us of him who is ſo; and *with* whom God *freely giveth all things*. So that *this*, Chriſt hath commanded us *to Do*, is no barren or unprofitable Ceremony; but as neceſſary to the Life and Health of the Soul, as Bread is to that of the Body. And did Men love their Souls as they do their Bodies, they would no more neglect the *Supper of the Lord*, than their *daily Food*.

Thus *tender and Gracious towards us*, hath our Lord ſhewn himſelf in Commanding us ſo *Eaſie*, ſo *Honourable*, ſo *Religious* and *Beneficial* a Duty; expreſſing his Authority wholly in Love, and ſerving himſelf of us only in doing us good. Inſomuch that to diſobey him, is Injury to our ſelves; and the refuſal of ſo much Good, an infliction of the more Evil. Whence the *Guilt of Neglecting* is not leſs manifeſt than *the Duty of Receiving*, to convince us yet further, of the *Neceſſity* of the *Lord's-Supper*. And therefore, we add concerning this Command, That,

VI. *By the Non-Obſervance thereof Guilt appears to be extremely aggravated*; even beyond what ordinarily attends the breach of other Divine Precepts; whereof though none may be neglected with leſs *Regret*, yet are none violated with more *Guilt*: There being peculiar Aggravations rendring this ſuch a Complicated, monſtrous and uncommon Sin, that as this Conſideration will juſtifie the Infliction of the utmoſt Vengeance threatned againſt any Sin, ſo ought it to diſſuade and deterr effectually from this of neglecting to *Do this in remembrance of Chriſt*. For the leaſt that can be ſaid hereof is, That hereby the *Authority*, and *Love*, and *Wiſdom* of our Lord is unworthily contemn'd; that our *Profeſſion*, our *Baptiſm*, our *Faith*, and *Divine Aſſiſtance* denied; an *Offence and Diſcouragement* to good Men ſcandalouſly given; an Inlett to *Diviſions*, to *Ignorance* and

and *Immorality* certainly laid open; and an occaſion created of inſupportable *Grief and Trouble* to our ſelves when we ſhall come to Die. All which things as they mightily ſtrengthen the force of this *Command*, ſo will they more convincingly diſcover the aggravated *Guilt* of its Neglect to diſſuade Men from it. Becauſe thereby,

1. *Chriſt's Authority is moſt unworthily contemned*; whom profeſſing to be our *Prince and Saviour*, we treat as ſome *Tyrant* or *Uſurper*, with ſuch Indignity and Rebellion as no other *Lawgiver* is wont to meet with. And while *Heathens* reverence their *Gods, which yet are no Gods*; whilſt *Mahometans* punctually obſerve the Laws of their *Mahomet*; and the *Jews* the Ordinances of *Moſes*, in many things, even to this day; *Chriſtians* only, to the reproach of their Religion, have ſo little regard to their *Chriſt*, as to diſobey him in this very *Command*, that hath a ſpecial Relation to the Benefit pretended to be had by him. They ſubmit to his Will no further, than it accords with their own. They turn their backs at their pleaſure upon what he Inſtitutes. They account not themſelves to be obliged to *Do* all he requires: which, what is this, but openly to declare, That *they will not have this Man to Reign over them*, Luke 19. 14. Such vile Affront to the *Authority*, and Legiſlative Power of *Chriſt*, doth a Cuſtomary neglect to receive the *Lord's-Supper* plainly imply. Whereby further,

2. *His Love and Kindneſs is no leſs ingratefully ſlighted.* Whom we ſhun to approach, whilſt he affects and ſeeks *Union* with us in *Myſteries* created on purpoſe, deſcending even to our *Senſuality*; and becauſe we want *Spiritual* Appetites, putting himſelf within reach of our *Natural*. Neither will we ſtir out of our own method, and way to meet him, but remain Inflexible to his ſo wonderful a Condeſcenſion, rejecting his Contrivance to engage us to

himſelf, turning our backs upon the *Memorials* of his Love, and refuſing to Commemorate as he would have us, thoſe very *Stripes*, which our Iniquities made, and *by which* alone we can be *healed*. This ſurely is an hardneſs of Heart, an Unnaturalneſs of Affection, never heard of among *Publicans and Sinners*, the worſt Men not uſually refuſing to *Do 'good to thoſe, who do good to them*; yet it is too Notoriouſly common in this Inſtance, among *Chriſtians*, and renders them both the moſt Impious and Inhumane of Sinners. And, the more ſo, becauſe hereby alſo,

3. *Chriſt's Wiſdom is Audaciouſly reproached.* A *Neglect* implies a *Diſlike* of his Ordinance; as an impertinent and needleſs Ceremony; not fit or worthy to be made a means of Grace and Salvation, preſumed to be better obtained without it. This Ordinance, were ſome Men allotted to ſet up a Religion in the World, ſhould never be inſtituted by them, as it was by their *Saviour*. Wherein is all the *Pride* and *Raſhneſs*, though much more *Preſumption* (upon the account of the Perſons concern'd) than was expreſs'd by the *Syrian Leper* towards the *Prophet*'s Preſcription for his Cure, 2 *Kings* v. 11,12. *Behold*, ſaith he, *I thought, he will ſurely come out to me, and ſtand and call on the Name of the Lord his God, and ſtrike his hand over the Place and recover the Leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar Rivers of Damaſcus, better than all the waters of Iſrael? May I not waſh in them and be clean?*

4. *Neither is this neglect agreeable to the Profeſſion of a Chriſtian*; who refuſes to *Do* what can alone diſtinguiſh him from *Jews* and *Pagans*. For none of the other Acts of Religious Worſhip are ſo peculiarly the *Badge* of *Chriſtianity*, or ſo directly and immediately intend a *Memorial* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, as this of the *Lord's-Supper*. And, therefore, for Men to ſay they are *Chriſtians*, becauſe they frequent

quent *Christian Assemblies*, and joyn in all the other parts of *Publick Worship*, is not sufficient; because this is done by *Infidels* upon occasion, and what *Education*, or *Custom*, or *Curiosity* will induce to; and are rather cold Intimations of a Man's *Opinion*, than of his *Faith*. And though a Man may be also an *Hypocrite* that *Communicates*; yet nevertheless he becomes thereby an outward *Professor*, and appears a Disciple of *Christ*. Whereas the *Non-Communicant* appears quite otherwise, however sincere and zealous he may be in his other Acts of Religious Profession, because he doth not *Confess Christ*, herein *before Men* in the most significant way, but denies him by not complying with it. Insomuch that the best that can be said of such is, That *they profess Religion, but not Christianity*; and that if then, they are *Christians*, they are so without the Proper *Profession* of it; and, for such Denial, and with-holding thereof, they hazard *Christ's Denial* of them *before his Father which is in Heaven*, Mat. x. 32, 33.

5. Neither further, is it only the *Outward Profession* that is hereby suppressed, but it is even the *Baptismal Covenant that is implicitly Renounced.* Which being made without our *Knowledge* and *Consent* when *Infants*, and since so frequently violated, doth oblige us to take it *upon our selves.* And for such a *Renewal* of it this *Ordinance* is appointed, when we arrive to *Years* and *Capacity.* But to neglect this, what is it, but a withdrawing our Consent, or refusing to Seal what was promised in our Name; or denying our selves to be under any Promise thereby, and that we are resolved to continue as free as we can, to be at our own Dispose and Pleasure? For if we *Own* or *Like* the Engagements of our *Baptism*, Why do we not *Confirm* and *Renew* them? Because, while we *Refuse* or *Delay This*, we *Renounce*, and make void *That*; and Declare, that had it been in our *Power* or *Choice*, we would never have consented

ſented to one more than we do to the other. So that hereby, as much as lies in our Power, we are reduced to the State of Infidels and Heathens. And then it will be leſs ſtrange if we add, That hereby, moreover,

6. *A main Article of our Creed is denied*, viz. The *Communion of Saints*, even *with Chriſt*, and with *one another*. Whereof this *Sacrament* is a principal Inſtrument; intended as an eſpecial Intercourſe between *Chriſt* and his *Church*, in the ſpiritual *Communication* of his own *Body* and *Blood*, and moſt affectionate *Union of his Members* thereby, both to *himſelf* and to *one another*. A refuſal whereof, is both a denial of the *Chriſtian Faith*, and *Excommunication* from the Benefit of a Fundamental *Church-Privilege*. And for a *Non-Communicant* to profeſs he *believeth the Communion of Saints*, is to publiſh his own *Hypocriſie*; and to *Profeſs that he knows God, but in Works denies him*, Tit. i. 16. Nor only is *Faith* hereby denied, but alſo,

7. *An inſtituted Means of Grace is neglected*. This *Sacrament* being an eſſential part of *Publick Chriſtian Worſhip*, and an appointed Conveyance of the Bleſſings of the *New Covenant*; and without which, where an extraordinary Providence doth not interpoſe, the certain Application thereof is not to be depended on. For as God is not ordinarily wont to work *without Means*, ſo it belongeth not to us to confine him to the *Means* he ſhall work by. And though *all the Means* of Grace tend to one and the ſame end, of Sanctification and Salvation, yet they operate ſeveral ways towards it, each according to its own Nature; and where therefore God hath commanded us to uſe *Means more than one*, there the uſe of *all but one* is neither a ſufficient diſcharge of Duty, nor right qualification for that Grace which is promiſed to a ſincere uſe of *all*. So that he that neglects to do this, whatever elſe he does, he falls

ſhort

ſhort of Duty, and is chargeable with the *neglect of his own Salvation*; and of having *done deſpite unto the Spirit of Grace*, Heb. ii. 3. 10. 29. Which, as it is fatal to the *Guilty Perſon*, ſo,

8. *It is an Offence and Diſcouragement ſcandalouſly given to the innocent and beſt Men.* Not only *Miniſters* grieving to ſee the untractableneſs of their People, and ſucceſsleſneſs of their Endeavours: But many *Unwary Souls* ſuffering by the Number and Authority of ſuch Miſleading Examples prevailing upon them; and the Zeal of Believers is apt to be dampt to ſee ſo few of their Mind, and the ſolemnity of the Ordinance ſo much check'd and defac'd. And this, then, lays open,

9. *An Inlet to Diviſions, Ignorance and Immorality, to the Churches* ruine, and the overthrow of *Chriſt's Kingdom* in this World. This Table was anciently accounted a Sacred Tye and *Conteſſeration* of *Chriſtians-Communion*; which while all duly frequented, *Union* and *Peace* made the *Church* Flouriſh; and the Flock never ſcattered till this Fold was forſook, and liberty taken to divide into Parties, as the great Enemy of this *Sacrament*, and of Mens *Salvation*, pleaſed to ſeduce them. And then the neceſſary *Preparations* for Communicating being diſuſed, and the benefit of Spiritual *Aſſiſtances* thereby wanted, Mens Minds ſoon grow dark and ſenſeleſs, and Truth and Duty are neither apprehended nor ſearched after; and one of the ſtrongeſt *reſtraints from Impiety* is thrown off; a way made to Sin without either ſhame or excuſe; and hereby a devaſtation brought upon the *Church*, which no endeavours have hitherto been able to ſtop or prevail againſt. So that whereas *Unworthy Communicants Eat and Drink their own Damnation*, the more *Unworthy Non-Communicants* occaſion, what in them lies, the Damnation of all, and Damn even *Religion* it ſelf. And this, therefore, is,

10. Laſtly, *What is likely to create inſupportable grief and trouble at the Hour of Death.* When the want of this *Sacrament* is wont to be perceived, and hath ever been accounted a moſt ſeaſonable *viaticum* or Proviſion wherewith Souls might *depart in peace*; and without which they uſually live but to make themſelves more afraid to Die. It having been truly obſerved that for the moſt part Perſons are found to be *Comforted* or *Dejected* on their *Sick-Beds*, according to their *Communicating* or *Non-Communicating* in the time of their *Healths*; inſomuch that 'tis difficult to determine which is moſt rare, in viſiting the Sick, to find a *Communicant* troubled in Mind, or a *Non-Communicant* (whom God hath given any ſence of his ſtate) that is not.

All theſe Aggravations as they diſcover the heinouſneſs of the Sin violating ſo peculiar a Command, ſo will they vindicate the juſtneſs of that vengeance threatned againſt it. Which is the laſt Argument to be urged, even,

VII. *The Everlaſting Damnation it expoſes to.* Which is *the Wages of* all *Sin*, and includes the utmoſt Puniſhment of any Sin, and is the peculiar danger of breaking this *Commandment*. For it is *Damnation* if it be *abuſed* or *complyed* with *Unworthily*; *He that Eateth and Drinketh Unworthily, Eateth and Drinketh Damnation to himſelf* (as it followeth the *Text*). And it is no leſs ſo if it be *Diſuſed* or *Neglected* unreaſonably. For *except ye Eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, and Drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you* (ſaith our *Saviour*,) *Joh.* vi. 53. Which words, though ſpoke before the Inſtitution of this *Sacrament* (as was likewiſe that Diſcourſe of *Baptiſm* to *Nicodemus*, *Joh.* iii. 5. before *Baptiſm* was appointed for a ſtanding Rite in the *Church*), yet did the *Ancient Church* generally underſtand them of Eating *Chriſt's* Fleſh in this *Sacrament*.

And

And whether they, and other later Expoſitors of their Mind, are right or wrong in their Interpretation, yet their Opinion is certainly Orthodox; ſince this danger of Everlaſting Death and Damnation is no other than what the Sin deſerves in its Nature, and tendeth to in its conſequences, and what is expreſly threatned to the neglect of *Baptiſm*, (which is the other Sacrament of equal rank with this;) And what was the appointed Puniſhment for the neglect of the *Jewiſh Paſſover*, which was but a Shadow or Temporary Type anſwering hereto, being the ſame under the *Law*, as this Feaſt of the *Lord's-Supper* is to us under the *Goſpel*, when *Chriſt as our Paſſover is* now alſo *Sacrificed for us*. So that the *Danger* of Sinfully omitting this Duty is apparently no leſs *Damnation*, than of any other Duty; and the *Neceſſity* of obeying this *Command* the very ſame as Eternal Life is to us.

And if all theſe ties of Conſcience be now rightly put together, then ſurely it will appear, that if God Almighty hath required any thing at Mens Hands, that may be called *Religion*, in order to *Salvation*, This Duty muſt come under the ſame Neceſſity and Obligation; and from this nothing can diſpence, but what Divine Providence may permit to be an inſuperable Bar againſt all poſſibility of *doing* this. So that none of thoſe *ſorry Shifts* and *deſigned Pretences*, ſo ordinarily made uſe of, and deſperately truſted to, can poſſibly acquit us, unleſs aſſurance could be had that either our *Saviour* did not intend what is here *commanded*; or that God hath provided for the Innocency of *Omiſſion* by as poſitive a proof of Scripture as he hath here declared for the neceſſity of *Performance* of this Duty.

The due conſideration hereof will naturally tend to beget and nouriſh a juſt Eſteem and Veneration for the conſtant and frequent uſe of this Holy *Sacrament*: And caution us to be as apprehenſive and

ſhy of violating this *Command* enjoyning it, as any other Duty preſcribed in the *Goſpel*. And the rather, becauſe its neglect is become ſo cuſtomary, and Examples are every where ſo numerous and prevalent to ſeduce. So that, however ſcandalous and ſinful it is in it ſelf, yet there is no Sin perſiſted in with leſs reproach and more quiet; nor apologized for more unreaſonably and conniv'd at with leſs concern to the diſhonour of *Chriſt*, and viſible decay of *Chriſtianity* among us.

Almighty God, therefore, by his Effectual Grace ſo vindicate the Neceſſity *of this his own Ordinance, and ſeaſonably reduce all to their Duty in Reſpect thereto: that by the conſtancy and worthineſs of our* Doing this in remembrance *of his Dear Son here on Earth, we may be* remembred *by him, for good, now he* is in his Kingdom *in Heaven: To whom be Glory now and for ever.* Amen.

SERMON

SERMON the Second.

ON THE Excuſes for Non-Communicating.

LUKE xiv. 18.

And they all with one conſent began to make Excuſe,——

HAVING in the foregoing Diſcourſe urged the *Neceſſity* of the *Sacrament* of the *Lord's-Supper*; I ſhall to ſucceed and compleat what hath been therein offered, add ſome further Endeavours more to remove the moſt uſual Pleas alledged to excuſe and hinder the due obſervation thereof.

For which end theſe words afford juſt occaſion, being part of a Parable made uſe of by our *Saviour*, whereby to convince the *Jews* of their groſs neglect of the gracious tenders of Mercy and Bleſſedneſs that had been made unto them. *A certain Man*, ſaith he, *made a great Supper, and bad many, And ſent his Servant at Supper time, to ſay to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one conſent began to make Excuſe.* They not only refuſed the *Invitation*, but ſought to juſtifie their *Refuſal*; nor was there only here and there *One* of the Gueſts that did ſo, but *all with one conſent*: Implying it to be a general Sin to ſlight and reject the Grace of God, and to perſiſt in the fault upon

upon a company of Excuſes fair and ſpecious in *ſhew*, though in *reality* vain and frivolous. Inſomuch that if to *Excuſe* were to *Juſtifie*, *Offenders* would be as rare as *Offences* are common, there being no Sin thought ſo good that all will be willing to own who are guilty thereof, and none ſo bad but moſt know how to make *Excuſes* for. *Excuſe* (as one ſays) *being a cover that will fit all Sins*; ſo that as there is no Sin neceſſitated to be without it, ſo there is none more extravagantly indulged therewith than the Sin of *Non-Communicating* in the *Lord's-Supper*. Of the Odiouſneſs whereof Men are ſo ſenſibly apprehenſive, that they durſt not ſo cuſtomarily turn their backs upon ſo acknowledged a Duty and Sacred Ordinance, had they not always in a readineſs ſome formal pretence, wherewith they endeavour to ſtop for the preſent the mouth of Conſcience. Therefore do we ſee while ſome very few good Chriſtians do duly and conſtantly preſent themſelves before the Lord at his Table, out of a Senſe of Duty; Multitudes of others; ſome of whom would be thought no leſs good, if not much better, do totally abſent themſelves, or neglect to appear there ſo oft as they might, as they alſo pretend out of Duty too. They will not call it a Sin to abſent from the Holy Feaſt, becauſe themſelves refuſe the Invitation thereto; and to endeavour therefore to make it ſomething elſe, they uſually daub and palliate this their fault with pretences drawn from Arguments of all ſorts, ſerving to every occaſion relating thereto; ſome being intended to excuſe a *Total*, and others only apologizing for an *Occaſional*, however frequent, *neglect* hereof.

Of the *former ſort*, ſome reſpect more immediately *themſelves*, who are the *Gueſts* invited; objecting a ſenſe of their own *Unworthineſs* to come; the neceſſary Temptations of their particular *Callings* to indiſpoſe them, and *inability to anſwer the deſign*

of

of coming, by a life ſuitable to their renewed Obligations afterwards. Some further, reſpect more ſtrictly the *Ordinance*; which is the Feaſt invited to; alledging its *Sacredneſs*, its *Difficulty*, its *Danger*, its *Unprofitableneſs*, and *Male-Adminiſtration*. And others alſo, caſt the Blame upon *Others*, that are the *Company* they are invited with; complaining that *Moſt*, and ſome of the *Beſt refuſe* to come with them; and of thoſe that do come, there are too *Many* whom they care *not to joyn with therein*.

Of the *Latter ſort*, are all thoſe *Occaſional Hindrances* inſiſted on to ſerve only a preſent turn; which, not preſerving from immediate *Guilt*, are no leſs requiſite to be conſider'd; and ſome of which however trivial, yet being objected, will deſerve to be anſwer'd. The moſt uſual we meet with inſiſt one while on the *Want of Charity*, either in themſelves towards others, or in others towards them: Another while, on ſome *Family Indiſpoſitions*, whether by *Sickneſs* in themſelves, or ſome other; a late *Feaſt*, an unſeaſonable *Viſit*, or *Diſappointment* of the Company intended to joyn with them: And, too often, even the *Unſeaſonableneſs of the Weather* is made an Excuſe for the Omiſſion of ſuch an Opportunity.

For there is hardly any *Non-Communicant* but will find ſomething to ſay; and there is hardly any thing that is commonly ſaid by them, but may be reduced to ſome of theſe Arguments here mention'd; whereby the Sin of their Omiſſion is endeavoured to be excuſed. If there ſhould happen to be any Objection not here taken notice of; 'tis likely to be ſomewhat leſs material; that may find its Anſwer, either here, or may deſerve none; and he that will not take then his Anſwer to his Objection, will remain, as to all humane Endeavours, irreclaimable, and as to all humane Appearance, nigh unto a Reprobate State; ſo that having forſa-

ken

ken God, he is deſerted by him; and being prejudic'd to Duty, nothing ſhall ever be ſaid to convince him of his Sin. Which is, indeed, the moſt rational Account that can be given of the continued uſe ſtill made of any Excuſe, after ſo frequent and apparent Refutations of all that have ever yet been made againſt this Holy Ordinance. For,

I. *As for thoſe intended to Excuſe for a Total Neglect* of the *Sacrament*; as they are *Unlawfully* urged, ſo are they *Weakly* grounded. For the Neglect of a known Duty is inexcuſable. There may be an Excuſe for an *Interruption*, but there can be none for a *Neglect* to do what God hath poſitively ordered to be done. And therefore, this if well weighed and applied, would ſerve for Anſwer to all the *Excuſes* of this kind. However, to abate of their Fondneſs for them, it will be requiſite alſo to Diſplay the Weakneſs of the Arguments Men depend upon to be excuſed by, from whatever Head they are taken. And therefore, conſider we

1. *Thoſe reſpecting more immediately themſelves*, who are the *Gueſt's* invited; objecting a Senſe of their own *Unworthineſs* to come; the unavoidable Temptations of their particular *Callings*, neceſſitating their Indiſpoſition thereto, and their miſtruſt of *Ability* to anſwer the Deſign of their coming, in a Life ſuitable to their renewed Obligations afterwards. None of which will appear to be ſufficient, were it allowable to make any Excuſe for a Total Omiſſion of ſo abſolute a Duty. For,

1. *A Senſe of Man's own Unworthineſs to come, when invited to this Holy Feaſt*, is no reaſon at all to excuſe their not coming. Becauſe it ſavours of *Pride* and *Folly*, to think we muſt be *Worthy* of the Divine Favours, which muſt all be acknowledg'd to be above Man's deſert, even to the leaſt common Mercy we enjoy. Not our *Merit*, but only our *Fitneſs* is Required

quired to receive them; whereof a penitent and humble Senſe of our ſelves is a principal Diſpoſition, without which no Man can approach to this Ordinance, in any Senſe *Worthily*. For this is a *Feaſt* prepared not for *Angels* and glorified *Saints*, but only for humble and penitent *Sinners*. And ſuch, by the *Grace* of God, and their own ſincere *Endeavours*, may the moſt *Unworthy* become; *theſe* being in every Man's Power to make uſe of; and of the *other* this *Sacrament* is an inſtituted means; (that excellent Degree of Goodneſs, which Men would have to fit them for it, being not to be had but by the uſe of it.) The *Neglect* whereof renders more *Unworthy*; and a ſincere Man will ſcruple no leſs the Sin of *Omitting a Duty*, than the hazard of *Performing it amiſs*. His equal Fears on both ſides will make him diligent in ſeeking Satisfaction, and in endeavouring ſuch a Reformation, as that he may offend neither one way nor the other. For it is not our *Senſe*, but our *Guilt* of being *Unworthy*, that is the only Indiſpoſition for receiving the Sacrament. And if it be *Guilt* that makes us fear to come *Unworthily* thereto, then why ſhould not the fear of *Guilt* make us afraid to abſent *Sinfully* therefrom? And if we fear *Guilt*, why do we not uſe the means to be rid on't, by a ſpeedy breaking off our Sin of *Neglect*, and by a ready Compliance with our Duty of *Receiving*. For ſo long as we perſiſt to Neglect a *known Duty*, we certainly continue to live in a *known Sin*: And ſo long, we are unfit and unworthy to ſerve God in *Any* Duty; and from a Senſe of *Unworthineſs*, have as much reaſon to refrain our *Prayers*, as being *Abominations*, *Prov.* xxviii. 9. And for the ſame reaſon that we yet think our ſelves obliged to *Pray*, ought we alſo to *Communicate*; and muſt reſolve it to be better to do our Duty, if not as well as we would, yet as well as we can, rather than not do it at all. For no Man that doth

his Duty as well as he can, needs to fear his doing amiſs; but he that, for fear of doing it amiſs, neglects it, he neceſſarily offends; and is as unfit to *Die* as he is to *Communicate*, and no more excuſable hereby from one than the other. For there is a poſitive Law to do both; and though only *one* can be omitted, yet *neither* is excuſable from a ſenſe of unfitneſs. For we muſt *Die* whether we be fit or no; And we muſt *Receive* and fit our ſelves for it in obedience to the ſame Divine Will. And as no Man goes about to excuſe his Dying for fear of his unpreparedneſs for it, ſo ought none to excuſe his *Non-Communicating* by an Argument that will not alter his Circumſtances in *Dying*; and which indeed, were it admitted, would never permit a Man to be prepared for either. For might he be excuſed *Dying*, as he excuſeth himſelf from *Communicating*, by his fears about his Fitneſs for it; as he would never think himſelf fit, ſo would he never conſent to do it; but think himſelf the more excuſable, the longer he defers, having more reaſon to fear, as he would have more guilt to account for. So that to plead *Unworthineſs* for *Neglect*, that ought only to be repented of and amended, in order to our ſpeedy and conſtant *Performance* of Duty, is a plain declaration of an intention never to do it at all. Becauſe it is (where once admitted) an excuſe that will never be anſwered; and will improve by uſe. Inſomuch that it is a Common Obſervation that thoſe who inſiſted hereupon Ten or Twenty Years ago, do ſo ſtill, and may as well do it as long as they live, thereby to excuſe for their never *Receiving*, being ſtill unſatisfied about their *Worthineſs* for the *Lord's-Supper*, as they ever will have more reaſon to be, the longer they abſent themſelves from it. In like manner,

2. *The unavoidable Temptations of any particular Calling* (pretended to neceſſitate an indiſpoſition to this Ordinance) cannot be a ſincere *Excuſe* for its neglect. For a Man cannot hope to live in this World in any Calling, or Circumſtances of Condition free from *Temptations*; which the *World* is full of, and our own falſe *Hearts* are ready to catch at, and the Devil's Subtily and Malice diſpoſed to inſnare us by. And this therefore is no neceſſary *Sin*, to indiſpoſe for Duty; becauſe it is what cannot be helped, and which may be deſigned, in the exerciſe of our Graces much to our *Advantage*, the rather to diſpoſe us for this Ordinance; and to urge us from a ſenſe of our continual danger, to a more frequent and zealous uſe thereof for our Security. And therefore the greater *Temptations* we have to encounter, with, the more vigilant will it concern us to be, and conſtant to our Duty. And no Men in the World have more need of *Spiritual Helps*, than ſuch as are neceſſitated to converſe moſt in *Spiritual Dangers:* Neither have any ſo much reaſon to complain of *Theſe*, as to Repent of and Reform a neglect of *Thoſe*; It not being the *Temptations*, but *Sloth* and *Careleſneſs to reſiſt* Temptations, that renders any Condition or Calling inconſiſtent with Duty. For, ordinarily, it is our own abuſe that creates the *Temptation* of any Calling; and there is no lawful Calling but may be uſed lawfully, and its Temptations be reſiſted and overcome. And no doubt but there have been ſincere and upright *Chriſtians* of every Calling, even amidſt the greateſt hazard of Temptations and hurry of Buſineſs, *walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord, blameleſs.* And, I think, there is no *Calling*, upon the account whereof, any Man thinks himſelf obliged to diſclaim God and all Profeſſion of Religion.

Tho' this may as reaſonably be done, becauſe equally indiſpoſed for thereby, as this Ordinance is. No Service is acceptable under the Power of a *Temptation*; and no Employment more neceſſitates to neglect the *Lord's-Supper*, than to caſt off the practice of all other Religious Duties; which rather than become guilty of, it becomes an indiſpenſable Duty to leave ſuch employment, or at leaſt to leave out of it all ſuch practices as are ſinful; which are not to be perſiſted in, though we were under no obligation to receive the *Sacrament*; being to preferr *Innocency* to Worldly *Gain*. So that whatever a Man's *courſe of Life* is in this World, yet may he be a *Worthy Communicant* if he will, notwithſtanding the *Temptations* he may ſtruggle with; whereby his *neglect* will be *aggravated*, but can never be *juſtified*. Finally,

3. *A miſtruſt of Ability to anſwer the deſign of Communicating, by a future Life ſuitable to the Obligations renewed in the Lord's-Supper cannot excuſe its neglect.* Becauſe it is unreaſonable to fear and miſtruſt *Ability* to do any thing that God hath made a Duty: Who beſt knoweth what we can do, and hath obliged us to nothing impoſſible. For it is not a Sinleſs ſtate of Perfection that God requireth from us, or that we hereby oblige our ſelves to: But only a *Penitential ſtate of Sincere Endeavours*, never to offend God *wilfully*, to watch againſt *Surprizes*, and if at any time we are enſnared, not to perſiſt in our Fault, nor ever return to an habitual courſe of Wickedneſs, but ſpeedily to repent and amend. And by God's help, (which is never denied any that heartily deſire and make uſe of it) this any one *may* do; and *muſt* do, whether ever he renew his Promiſe thereof in this *Sacrament* or no. For this is what he hath vowed in his *Baptiſm*, which is of Eternal Obligation to him; And what all his hopes of future welfare

welfare depend on, without which he is irrecoverably undone for ever. And this, therefore, being of abſolute neceſſity, is no more to be ſcrupled for fear of any conſequent Danger, than the *Eating* our Meat is to be forborn for fear of its breeding *Diſeaſes*, or the Adminiſtration of a proper *Remedy* to be refuſed, for fear of a *Relapſe*. For no Man is neceſſitated to *Violate* the *Vows* he reneweth in this Ordinance, but he is abſolutely neceſſitated to a frequent Renewal of them herein; and by ſo doing will be moſt likely to be able to keep them; whereby they are rendred more Sacred; and a regard and remembrance thereof will be hereby quickned and confirmed; and a means of God's own appointment, which will be ſure to be accompanied with the Divine Bleſſing, honeſtly uſed. And the viſible good ſucceſs of ſuch Communicating ought to convince us that there is no ſuch danger of breaking our Vows then rightly renewed. For how ill lives ſoever ſome few *Communicants* ſhould be obſerved to lead; this is, indeed a good Reaſon for caution to us, to make our Sacramental Promiſes upon true Principles of Piety, (which thoſe, 'tis likely never did) but is no reaſon to make us fear our not making good what we ſhall rightly promiſe. Otherwiſe, this Ordinance would be ſo far from being what it is deſigned to be, an *Inſtrument of Holineſs*, that it would prove only a Snare to aggravate Guilt, and which then, the Tempter would be ſo far from ſuggeſting ſcruples to hinder Men from; that he would be ſure to employ his ſubtilty to draw them more to it. Whereas, 'tis evident, that where there is one Sinner that periſheth, by returning to a courſe of Wickedneſs after ſuch Sacred Vows repeated againſt it; there are Thouſands that periſh, that would never be prevailed with to confirm hereby their Vows, ever to

amend at all. And, finally, ſuppoſing it ſhould happen according to theſe pretended *Fears*, (which yet is very unlikely, and as well ſecured againſt as is poſſible) that a Man ſhould return to his former courſe of Sin after his Vows renewed at the *Lord's-Supper* againſt it; yet doth not even this (though greatly aggravating guilt) render ſuch an one's Condition *Deſperate*, nor more *Dangerous* than theirs who obſtinately refuſe to Vow againſt their Sins hereby at all. For even ſuch a *Relapſe* is, through the Merits and Satisfaction of Chriſt Pardonable upon a renewal of Repentance, for which this Ordinance is both the Means and Opportunity; Whereas a continued neglect of Receiving the *Lord's-Supper*, and wilfully perſiſting in the Sin of omitting a known Duty is a ſtate of *Impenitence* for which there is no Pardon. And therefore, far more reaſon is there to fear our continuing *Non-Communicants*, than to fear our *Inability* to live worthy *Communicants*; which it is ſo unreaſonable, and pernicious to fear, ſo as not to endeavour it at all.

Thus eaſily and fully anſwerable are all the *Scruples*, reſpecting the *Communicant's* ſenſe of *Unworthineſs*, the *Temptations of their Callings*, and *Miſtruſtfulneſs of their Ability* to anſwer the Obligations of this *Fœderal Rite*, wherewith a *Total neglect* thereof is uſually Apologized for. Proceed we to conſider next,

2. *Thoſe reſpecting more ſtrictly the Ordinance it ſelf*, which is the *Feaſt* invited to, alledging its *Sacredneſs*, its *Difficulty*, its *Danger*, its *Unprofitableneſs*, and *Male adminiſtration*; which however Zealouſly urged, will yet appear but weak Arguments to Juſtifie a *Non-Communicant*. For,

1. *The*

1. *The Sacredneſs of the Lord's-Supper* (it being a Feaſting on the *Body* and *Blood* of *Chriſt*, and Eating at the ſame Table with Almighty God) is what cannot be too much reverʼd, and in the ſenſe whereof all ought to be aware of *Preſuming* thereupon, and be tenderly cautious of the *Prophanation* thereof: But from the ſenſe of this totally to neglect, or infrequently to comply with its Inſtitution, as is pretended by ſome, is evidently unreaſonable: For by ſuch a Senſe Men can only be qualified to *Communicate worthily*, and will be leaſt liable either to *Preſume* upon or *Prophane* the Ordinance. Neither is it *Humility* but *Preſumption* to refuſe to do whatever God hath commanded; that being a Feigned *Reverence* which diſcards *Obedience*; upon which pretence the whole *Chriſtian Profeſſion* may as reaſonably be ſlighted; the Sacredneſs, and Honour and Privilege whereof is no leſs above us, ſuch as could never have been modeſtly aſpired after, had not the unbounded kindneſs of Heaven freely offered and invited us to accept it. Which therefore we think our ſelves obliged to do with all humble Thankfulneſs, and dare not refuſe it out of a pretence of Modeſty and Self-abaſement. Nor need it to be feared that *Familiarity* in Spirituals will *breed Contempt*, as it is obſerved to do in Temporals; ſince the worth of thoſe ever as much exceeds, as the Satisfaction of theſe fall ſhort of Fancy and Expectation; and which therefore improves as much in one, as it decays in the other by *Uſe*. Only *Miſ-uſage* and *Diſ-uſage* can render *Sacred* things Contemptible; which is all that belongs to us to fear; ſo that if ſo be we do our Duty as *well* and *often* as we are required, we ought to leave the Vindication of its Honour to God, who will take care of his own *Inſtitutions* himſelf; our Conſtancy wherein, is the only means of begetting and expreſſing

our Veneration thereof; which Neglect reproaches. And therefore the *Primitive Chriſtians*, who knew beſt how to eſteem the *Sacredneſs* of this Ordinance, and made the moſt exemplary Profeſſion of *Humility*, are generally obſerved to have been the moſt conſtant and frequent herein; being ſo far from refraining wholly, or complying rarely out of Modeſty and Veneration, that they *Communicated* daily; ſo that our *Reverence* is of a much differing make from theirs, if it produce ſuch contrary Effects; and may juſtly be ſuſpected to be (as one calls it) but the *Devil* in *Samuel*'s Mantle, *Sloth* clad in the Habit of Humility.

2. *The Difficulty of Worthily Communicating*, is no *Excuſe* for any one's Neglect of the *Lord's-Supper*. Becauſe good things are always Difficult, and Diligence and Labour is Man's Duty; which is never more advantageouſly expended than in the Service of God; nor more reaſonably required than in this Duty. For herein nothing is impoſed that is impoſſible; nothing but what is neceſſary to render us good Men, and acceptable Chriſtians; which however Difficult at firſt, yet is never complain'd nor repented of by them that have been inured thereto; who are deſirous to be ſaved upon any Terms; and think themſelves obliged to obey God, in his more harſh as well as eaſier Commands: Being aſſured, that no *Labour* will prove to be *in vain in the Lord*; that the Service of Sin and Luſts exact much more; to which only is owing all the Difficulty that we are neceſſitated to undergo herein; for which there is always proportionable Aſſiſtance proffered to help through; and wherein no more is required, than what we have Ability and Leiſure for; ſo that *unto whomſoever much is given, of him* only *ſhall much be required*, *Luke* xii. 48. and provided there be no wilful Neglect of due Preparation,

Preparation, God requires and will accept of ſuch as Men can make. So that no Pretence of Difficulty, or want of Time and Ability ought to be urged, or can ever be allowed to put us by our Duty in this Caſe. And to further,

3. *The Hazard and Danger of Communicating Unworthily*, is very impertinently, and impiouſly urged to diſcourage Perſons from *Communicating* at all. Becauſe, though it is ſaid, That *he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himſelf*; yet, probably, the *Damnation* here threatned to the unworthy *Corinthians* was peculiar to them, and thoſe firſt Ages of the *Church*; executed in miraculous Strokes of *Diſeaſes* and Death (the Power whereof is now ceaſed) as a Judgment for their open *Schiſms* and Groſs *Intemperances* introduced by their *Love-Feaſts*, (the occaſion whereof is alſo now wanting.) Or however, *Damnation* is no where repreſented to be the certain conſequence of *Communicating*, and we may avoid it if we will, and yet come to the *Sacrament*; and there is as much *Danger* in unneceſſarily Abſenting from it; which only *changeth* but *abateth* nothing of Guilt; there being a *Rock*, we may ſplit on, on each hand of us. Nay, of the two, it is more of *Contempt*, that expoſeth to more *Guilt* and *Danger*, to Neglect the Sacrament, than to partake of it *Unworthily*; becauſe, he that lives in a continued Neglect of a known Duty, hath no reaſon to fear being in a worſe Condition; and he that continues to do his Duty may thereby better it, by God's Grace if he will. And therefore, the only reaſonable Inference from the feared *Danger* of *Unworthily Communicating* is, for our Safety, to uſe Care and Endeavours, that we neglect not to *Communicate as Worthily* as we can: otherwiſe upon the ſame Pretence, any may juſtifie a renouncing of all Religion; the unworthy Performance of its other Duties, incurring

incurring a like *Guilt* and *Danger*, whereby a Man may Damn himſelf for fear of Damnation. Again,

4. *The Unprofitableneſs of this Ordinance*, pretended to be experienc'd in themſelves, or obſerv'd in others who uſe it, cannot excuſe a ſinful *Neglect* thereof. Becauſe, it being made our *Duty*, it muſt be perſiſted in, whether we are better by it or no; wherein we intend chiefly to ſerve God; and are bound to obſerve his Will, in whatever he pleaſes, not only *without*, but *contrary* to our Intereſt. Hereby, having done our Duty, we cannot be worſe, as we neceſſarily muſt have been, had we neglected it; and if we do it as we ought we ſhall be better; ſince whatever can be hoped to make a Man better, is hereby conveyed both from the Vertue of God's *Promiſe*, and the Nature of *the Duty*, if not always Preſently, or in the Inſtances and Degrees expected, yet always Effectually, according to our Needs and Capacities, as God ſees fitteſt for us. And therefore, he that is not better hereby, it is only through his own Fault; which alſo will fruſtrate the Benefit of all other Ordinances, which being more frequented, may as reaſonably be forborn and renounced together with this *Sacrament* upon this Pretence, that will remain no longer than Men are willing it ſhould do. Finally,

5. *The Male-Adminiſtration of the Lord's Supper*, complain'd of by ſome in our *Church*, from ſometimes a Diſlike of the *Miniſter* adminiſtring, and ſometimes an averſion to the *Poſture* it is required to be received in, is a no leſs unreaſonable *Apology* for the *Omiſſion* of this Duty, or for *Separation* from our Aſſemblies.

1. *For the Miniſter adminiſtring.* Be he what he will, yet he is a Divine Officer, and ought not to be cenſured or deſpiſed lightly. Neither are all alike faulty; ſo that this *Excuſe* will not ſerve for all Perſons nor at all times: There being plenty

(God

(God be praiſed !) of ſuch Miniſters in our *Church*, as from which the moſt nice need not fear Pollution. And where it is otherwiſe, though it is a Deplorable thing, and matter of Humiliation, yet it derives no Detriment to the *Ordinance*, nor Guilt to the *Worthy Communicant*; the Virtue of that depending on the Promiſe of God, whoſe Inſtitution it is, and the Acceptableneſs of this only on Mens own Worthineſs; wherein being well ſatisfied, none have reaſon to think worſe of the Gift, for the hand it is ſent by; there having always been ſcandalous Miniſters concern'd in Adminiſtration of Holy things in the *Church*; and wherewith *Communion* muſt never have been held, if none was to be had where ſuch were. And therefore, our *Saviour* himſelf did Communicate where ſuch did Officiate; not rejecting the Miniſtry of *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, who were as bad Men or worſe than any now complain'd againſt. And ſo,

2. *For the Poſture required* to Communicate in; which in our *Church* being *Kneeling* ſome there have been who have charged this with ſavouring too much of *Idolatry*; unſuitable to our *Lord's Example*, and the Nature of the *Sacrament*; never uſed in the Church, till introduced by the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*; wherewith they not liking to comply, they therefore refuſe Communion in this *Sacrament* with us. Whereas all agree that *Kneeling is contrary to no expreſs Law of Chriſt* that obliges to the obſervance of any different Geſture. For this is left uncommanded, and cannot therefore be a Sin; nor can it be any good Reaſon to refuſe to do *what is bidden*, unleſs alſo we may do *what is not bidden*, and omit a Divine Command, unleſs we may perform it after our own manner. *Nor is Kneeling any culpable Deviation from our Lord's Example* in the firſt Inſtitution in this *Sacrament*: It not being certainly to be proved, what particular

Geſture

Geſture he either then uſed himſelf, or his *Apoſtles* after him herein; which, however being no part o the Inſtitution, the Inſtitution is not broken, though the Poſture be altered; concerning which, *Chriſt's* bare Example cannot oblige without his Command; whereto the Poſture of *Sitting* is as unconformable as this of *Kneeling*; and which is complyed with beſt by them, who obediently ſubmit herein to the Cuſtom and Conſtitution of the *Church* they belong to. *Thus a Geſture of Devotion ſeemeth beſt to ſuit it*, being a Religious *Feaſt*, and an Act of *Chriſtian Worſhip*. *And it no way contradicts the general Practice of the Church*, both now and in the firſt and pureſt Ages of it; *neither can it be proved to have been firſt brought in by Idolaters*; or if it were, *not therefore to be concluded ſinful*; being *out of danger of Idolatry, as uſed and enjoyned in the Church* of *England*, where all ſuch Intention is expreſly diſclaim'd, and which if owned would be *Idolatry*, whatever the Poſture were; and which, Finally, if Men have either a due value for *Authority*, or a ſincere Deſire of this *Sacrament*, for the ſake hereof, rather than diſobey the one, or miſs of the other, they ought at leaſt to comply with; the Inconvenience of a *Geſture* having nothing to preponderate the danger of a *Schiſm*.

And thus have we briefly vindicated this Sacred *Ordinance* from all thoſe uſual *Scandals* commonly reflected upon it, whereby Men are wont to endeavour to *Excuſe* for its ſinful *Neglect*; and which ought hence to appear to be the more *Inexcuſable*; although there are, further, to be conſidered,

3. *Others caſting the Blame upon their Brethren* that are the *Company* they are invited with; complaining that *Moſt*, and ſome of the *Beſt refuſe* to come with them; and of thoſe that do come, there are *too many*, whom they care *not to joyn with therein*: Preſuming that the *Example* of ſome

that

that are *Non-Communicants*, and the *Unworthineſs* of others that are *Communicants*, may warrant any ones *Omiſſion* of this Duty; which are not more certainly made *Excuſes*, than evidently unreaſonable and groundleſs *Pretences*. For,

1. *The Example of never ſo good Company* abſtaining from the *Lord's-Supper*, cannot excuſe for any ones *Neglect* of it. Becauſe, in judging what is *Duty*, we are not to take our meaſures from other Men's *Practice*; which is apt to be faulty, and is never fully anſwerable to their own Duty, and therefore a very falſe Rule whereby to judge of ours. Neither is Diſobedience in the beſt of Men any warrant for the like in us; becauſe we are always obliged to do our Duty, whether others obſerve it or no; and it is not the *Example* of any other, but only the *Command and Will of God*, that is to over-rule us in every Action. And therefore it cannot be any part of a Man's *Goodneſs*, to abſtain from this Ordinance, which God hath *Commanded*, (Goodneſs not conſiſting in diſobeying, but in the quite contrary.) And though a Man may be acceptably good, whilſt through invincible Scruples, and an honeſt Ignorance he doubts his Duty, yet, being better inform'd, and once convinc'd, his *Omiſſion* is not to be perſiſted in without preſumptuous *Sin* that calls for *Repentance* and ſpeedy *Amendment*; and it may be pity'd, but not imitated. And though,

2. *The worſt of Men are ſometimes admitted* to this *Sacrament*, and our *Communions* are *Mixt*; yet even This is no ſufficient *Excuſe* for any ones Neglect thereof. Since we ought to beware of being too *Cenſorious*, and ſhould be willing to hope the beſt; not knowing but ſuch come here to be better; and from whoſe *Communion* none

ought to withdraw, 'till they have firſt done their parts, in *Chriſtian Admoniſhment*, to make them ſo; whereby they may be likely, to be either *Reform'd* or Legally *Excommunicated*; or if they ſhould be neither; yet this *Admiſſion* not being our Fault cannot *hurt* us, nor ought it to *hinder* us in doing our Duty; for which only our own, and not anothers Sins can indiſpoſe us. Every Man is to bear his own Burthen, and to *Examine himſelf*, and not another, before he *eats and drinks* at the Lord's Table; and there may be here a *Communion* in *Profeſſion* without any in *Guilt*. Neither is there either *Precept* or *Example* to be found in *Scripture* ſufficient to warrant any Man's withdrawing himſelf from this Ordinance becauſe of the Preſence of wicked Perſons. For this ſavours of too much *Pride* and *Uncharitableneſs*; and as much indiſpoſeth for a worthy Reception of the *Lord's-Supper* as any of thoſe Faults condemn'd in others, whereby they fear the Ordinance and themſelves are in danger to be polluted. And uſually the better and more *Worthy-Communicant* any Man is, the more ſenſible is he of his own Badneſs, and leſs mind hath he to complain of the Badneſs of others; being more ready, were there any reaſon in this Pretence, to confeſs that others might as juſtly refuſe *Communion* with him.

Thus have we briefly conſider'd all thoſe common *Excuſes*, inſiſted and rely'd upon, for a *Total Neglect* of receiving the *Lord's-Supper*; which it is impoſſible for *any thing* to juſtifie; being a Duty ſo *Poſitive* and eaſie to be underſtood, that nothing can *Excuſe*, and every Excuſe ought not to be allowed to ſuſpend the performance of it. And therefore,

II. *As for thoſe intended to Apologize only for an occaſional, however frequent neglect of this Sacrament;* though

though doubtleſs, ſuch there may be lawfully made, yet are neither all that are made lawful, nor lawfully urged to hinder a preſent Opportunity. The moſt uſual whereof are, as was obſerved to be,

1. *The want of Charity*; whether in *our ſelves towards others*, or in *others towards us*: both which are too often made hindrances to this Duty, though neither always abate of the Sin of its neglect. For,

The want of Charity in our Selves, upon whatever Provocation from another, is a Sin in its ſelf which can never Excuſe the neglect, though it may hinder the right performance of any *Duty*. And therefore an equal neceſſity lies upon us to quit both Sins; and we are neither to be *Out of Charity*, nor to *abſtain from the Lord's-Supper*, as we value our own Innocency or God's Favour, be it never ſo difficult to us. For whilſt we are ſo, we ſhall be not only unfit to *Communicate*, but, alſo, even ſo much as to ſay our *Prayers*; wherein *Holy Hands are to be lifted up without wrath*, 2 Tim. viii. which will not only render our Addreſſes *unprofitable* but *prejudicial*. (Our *Forgiveneſs with God* being ſuſpended upon our *Forgiving them that Treſpaſs againſt us*). And yet are not all neceſſarily liable to this *Hindrance* who make it ſuch to themſelves; there being a poſſibility to maintain *Charity*, where there may be a *Difference*; and to ſuſpect it to be *loſt* when it may be *entire*. For there are many *Diſturbances* of *Charity* which are no *Breaches* of it; and there are ſeveral degrees of *Brotherly Love*, which are not alike a Duty at all times, or towards all Perſons: And theſe ought to be no matter of *Scruple*, (though often made ſo) to detain and excuſe from a conſtant attendance on this Ordinance. For thus, ſometimes, ſome have thought

themſelves not to be in *Charity* enough to receive the *Sacrament*, becauſe they cannot *Forget* as well as *Forgive* an Injury: Whereas it is not in our power, it may be, perfectly to *Forget it*; Nor would it be always adviſable that we ſhould do ſo if we could. And ſo long as our Remembrance deſigns no ill effect, it cannot hurt, nor ought it to hinder Duty. Others object their *want of Charity*, becauſe they cannot but *think the worſe of him that hath injured them*: Whereas this is not only *Natural* but *Neceſſary*, if it neither miſtake nor exceed; ſuch an *ill Opinion* being owing purely to anothers *Fault*, (whereof we may judge as we find) and not to any Inclination or Uncharitableneſs in our ſelves. Others, again miſtruſt their *Uncharitableneſs*, from the *Diſturbance the ſight of their Enemy gives them*; which is indeed, an Argument rather of *Impatience*, than of *Uncharitableneſs*, ſo long as it is void of any Motions towards Paſſion and Revenge; and expreſſes more of *Sorrow* than of *Hatred*; and may oblige us to moderate and ſhun the occaſion of our *Grief*, by avoiding the Preſence that diſturbs us; but ought not to hinder our attendance on this Ordinance that is a means to ſupport and quiet us. Yea, the *intermiſſion of Familiarity* is ſometimes miſtaken for *Uncharitableneſs*: Which, if not *Cauſeleſs*, is *Prudence*; to ſecure our ſelves from future Injuries, and to Chaſtize our offending Brother for thoſe that are paſt, in order to reduce him to Repentance and Reconciliation; and which is no way inconſiſtent with all Offices of *Juſtice* and *Peace*, which is as much love as we owe to any that hath done us a real injury. But the moſt uſual and dangerous Suſpicions of the *want of Charity* that keeps Men from the *Sacrament is being at Law*; which yet is no further inconſiſtent with *Charity* than as it is abuſed

abuſed and made inconſiſtent with all other Duties of *Chriſtianity*. Indeed the dangerous Temptations it is ever attended with, ought to make Men backward to go to Law, and be very wary in doing ſo, and more willing to hazard the loſs of their Goods than of their Innocency: But being neceſſarily engaged therein upon a good Cauſe and weighty Concern without Malice, and willing to a reaſonable ſpeedy agreement, and there being nothing contrary to the *Duty of a Chriſtian*, there ought to be nothing herein to hinder this *Chriſtian Ordinance*. So that the *want of Charity, in our ſelves*, however plauſible; yet is either oft in theſe miſtaken inſtances thereof, a *groundleſs Excuſe*; or always otherwiſe a *Sinful Hindrance from the Holy Communion*. And as little reaſon is there to make Excuſes from

The want of Charity in others towards us. Becauſe, if this be groundleſs, and we have given no juſt Provocation, then the *Sin* is wholly theirs and not ours, and may indiſpoſe them, but ought not to hinder us from doing our Duty. To be hated and moleſted by Enemies was the lot of our Bleſſed Lord, of his Apoſtles, and his beſt followers in all Ages. And although God requires us to *Love our Enemies*, yet he no where requires us to *make our Enemies to Love us*: But if the Fault be our own, and we have given ſome juſt occaſion for others diſpleaſure againſt us, then is it our Duty ſpeedily to amend and not perſiſt to hinder Duty by it; ſeeking *Reconciliation* by proper ſatisfaction, ingenuous Confeſſion, humble ſubmiſſion, and ſincere promiſes according to our Saviour's Rule in this Caſe; *Mat.* v. 23, 24. *When thou bringeſt thy Gift to the Altar, and there remembreſt that thy Brother hath ought againſt thee; go thy way, firſt be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy*

Gift. And therefore *want of Charity*, in no caſe, ought to hinder a conſtant attendance on the Holy Communion; ſince Charity it ſelf may in both inſtances be greatly promoted by it.

2. *There are Family Indiſpoſitions* alſo, made *Hindrances* to this Duty, that ought not to *Excuſe* from it: Such are, *Sickneſs in our ſelves* or *ſome other*; a late *Feaſt*, an unſeaſonable *Viſit*; or *Diſappointment* of the Company which intended to joyn with us.

As for *Sickneſs in our ſelves*, if it be to that degree as to indiſpoſe for any Buſineſs, or to render it unſafe to ſtir abroad, God will accept the Will for the Deed, who prefers *Natural* and *Eſſential Duties* before *Poſitive Inſtitutions*, and *Mercy before Sacrifice*; wherein yet Men ought to be very Sincere, and to be Backward, and ſhew ſome trouble in *Excuſing* themſelves; and not contrive (as is but too uſual) to aggravate the preſent indiſpoſition by unneceſſarily allotting ſuch opportunities for times of taking Phyſick. And if thereby our own Buſineſs or Diverſions need not to be hindred, neither can our Service to God be excuſed; eſpecially in this inſtance which is ſo ſeaſonable and ſuitable to ſupport and ſanctifie a Sick State. And leſſer *Excuſe* is there, where the *Sickneſs* that hinders is anothers. Hereby to be ſo far diſturbed as to be unfitted for Duty, will argue *Impatience*, for which God may poſſibly deal worſe with our Relation, for our Sin; whoſe *Affliction* ought rather to drive us to our Duty, and put us upon exerciſing true *Repentance*, and moſt effectually interceeding for Divine Mercy and Help in this time both of neceſſity and Advantage; God being never more inclined to hear, nor our Prayers likelier to ſpeed than when offered with the commemorative Sacrifice of his Son, who has Authority and Merit to obtain

obtain all we want or can reaſonably deſire from him. And ſo for

Feaſting, Whereby ſome excuſe themſelves from an opportunity of Communicating; becauſe, it may be, the Day before they have either made or been at a *Feaſt*. Which, however unſeaſonably it was contrived, and might poſſibly have been better waved for that preſent, yet being innocently uſed it is *Friendly* and *Charitable*; and is nothing, if in all things elſe we are duly qualified, that is inconſiſtent with a worthy Reception of the *Lord's-Supper*, and which was an uſual thing among the First *Chriſtians*, whoſe *Love-Feaſts* were not only on the ſame Day, but at the ſame time with their *Communions*. And to neglect our Duty for this, is to preferr our *Feaſting with our Neighbour*, before our *Feaſting with the Lord*; with both whom we are allowed a due correſpondence together, and may be civil to one another without being unfaithful in our Service to God. Therefore, it is not *Feaſting*, but only Sinning at a *Feaſt*, through *Intemperance*, *Rioting*, *Quarrelling*, or the like, which incapacitates for the *Sacrament*. This is a Man's own Fault; and he muſt Repent of it, and do ſo no more; and then he may yet be fit to Communicate, and ought not hereby to excuſe his Neglect.

An unſeaſonable Viſit, is no better an *Apology* for the Omiſſion of this Duty. Becauſe Acts of *Civility* ought always to give way to *Religious Acts*. And 'tis a part of *Friendſhip* to promote rather than hinder Obedience to God. If then our Friend be God's Friend he will joyn with us, or be pleaſed to find us Engaged in God's Service, which he himſelf preferreth before all Company, or if otherwiſe, he will be unworthy our Civility, and the loſs of his Favour be better hazarded than that of God's who is our Chief Friend and Benefactor. When, there-

fore, more Honourable Perſons, or better Friends invite or viſit us than he; then, and not till then, let us turn our backs upon his Table, and pay them attendance inſtead of him. But ſince he can have no Competitors in this Caſe; where is the *Juſtice*, the *Honour*, the *Reſpect* and *Duty* to him, when this is given as a Reaſon, or made an hindrance of any ones abſence at any time from the *Sacrament*? And ſuch another lame *Excuſe*, which Men are not aſhamed ſometimes to alledge, is

Their Diſappointment of the Company of ſome one intended to joyn with them herein, accidentally prevented that they *could not*, or ſinfully negligent and unprepared that they *would not come*; and therefore it is deferred at preſent, that both may *Communicate* together another time. Now this is a Sinning for *Company*, and to make our Friend's Diſobedience an occaſion of our own. Whereas it would be greater Kindneſs to them and our ſelves, to endeavour to atone for their Neglect by our Attendance; and by our good *Example* excite their Reſolution and Care to do ſo no more. So unreaſonably are ſuch *Family-Indiſpoſitions*, made *Occaſional Hindrances* to this Duty. Yea, too often,

3. *Even the Unſeaſonableneſs of the Weather* is made a Diſcouragement thereto. Which as it argues great *Indifferency*, ſo it betrays ſhameful *Partiality* in Men towards Religion; who are unwilling to undergo the leaſt Inconveniencies for their *Spiritual*, and are reſolute againſt all Hazards, and Hardſhips in their *Temporal* Concerns. For *Chriſtians* that are Liſted to *Fight a good Fight*, to *take up their Croſs*, to *ſtrive*, *to deny* themſelves, even to the *plucking out an Eye*, and *cutting off a right Hand*, owe much more to the Service of their Lord, than this and ſuch like Objections can amount to. Carnal *Delights*, and worldly *Gain*, we ſee every day purſued,

purſued, without Complaint, and to leſs Profit, through ſuch Obſtructions; which therefore, can never *Excuſe*, but will greatly *Aggravate* Omiſſions of this Duty.

Such are the *Pretences* commonly inſiſted on, for a *Total* and *Occaſional* Neglect of this *Holy Sacrament*. Some of which would have been not worth mentioning had they not been, by ſome objected; and there are none of them but might as well excuſe from all Religious Duties whatſoever. And why they are only level'd againſt *this*, can no otherwiſe be more rationally accounted for, than by imputing it to our *Tempters* Malice, and Subtilty to ruin us with himſelf, by taking off hereby the greateſt reſtraint from Sin, and cutting off the Neck of all Obedience in this one Duty; the Neglect whereof ſo infallibly introduces the Neglect of all other Duties. And conſidering then, whom ſuch Scruples gratifie, and whither they tend; methinks, Men ſhould at laſt begin to ſee the Deluſion, and be more wary and jealous of their Safety and Intereſt.

But ſome there are, whom nothing will convince, they being ſway'd by Prejudice more than guided by Truth; withſtanding the cleareſt Evidence that ſtands not with their own Occaſions. And ſuch all ſeem to be, who preſume to perſiſt inſenſible under their *Great Prejudice*, upon little and ſo often confuted *Arguments* againſt this Ordinance.

In the *Primitive* Times, there was no *Excuſe* to hinder Men from the *Lord's-Supper*, but what hindred them from becoming *Chriſtians*. It is but of late, that Men began to profeſs themſelves *Chriſtians*, and at the ſame time Scruple this purely and principal *Chriſtian Duty*. From which fatal

fatal Folly may all desist before it be too late Returning to their *Obedience*, notwithstanding these, or any other *Pleas*; whereby no good Man ever need to be *Hindred*, nor any ill Man can ever be *Excused*. And,

O Lord, we beseech thee, let thy continual Pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and because it cannot continue in Safety without thy Succour, preserve it evermore by thy Help and Goodness, through Jesus Christ our Lord: To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, Three Persons, and one God, be all Honour and Glory, now and evermore. Amen.

FINIS.

7 DE65

BOOKS *Lately Printed for* John Wyat *at the* Roſe *in St.* Paul's *Church-Yard.*

A Catechetical Courſe of Sermons for the whole Year; being an Explanation of the Church Catechiſm in Fifty Two diſtinct Diſcourſes on ſo many ſeveral Texts of Scripture; wherein are briefly contained the moſt Neceſſary Points of Chriſtian Doctrine. In 2 Vol. 8*vo.* price 12*s.*

An *Ordinary Day well ſpent*, in a Decad of Directions proper for the Young and Ignorant, to reduce them to and ſecure them in a Virtuous Courſe of Life. Price 1*d.* or 6*s.* an Hundred. Both by *Peter Newcome*, M. A.

The *Sincere and Zealous Practice of Religion Recommended*, in Conſideration of the Certainty of its Principles, the Reaſonableneſs of its Duties, and the Great Wiſdom of Mankind in ſerving God. To which is added a Brief Account how thoſe who incline to be Religious, may beſt bring their good deſires to good effect. Price 4*s.*

A Diſcourſe of Fornication, ſhewing the great Evil of that Sin, *&c.* Price 1*s.*

A Vindication of Infant-Baptiſm, from the Four Chief Objections brought againſt it; price 6*d.* Theſe by *John Turner*, M. A.

A Vindication of the Chriſtian Church in the Baptizing of Infants, drawn from the Holy Scriptures.

Family

Family Devotions for Sunday Evenings, in Fif Two Sermons, with Practical Prayers.

Family Prayers for every Day in the We Price 2*d.* or 12*s.* an Hundred. Theſe by *Theoph Dorrington*, Rector of *Wittreſham* in *Kent.*

A Perſwaſive to a Serious Preparation to L and Judgment; containing Conſiderations a Directions in order thereto. Being a Supplem to the *Chriſtian Monitor.* Price 3*d.* or 20*s.* Hundred.

Expoſitory Notes, with Practical Obſervati on the 4 Holy Evangeliſts, St. *Matthew*, St. *Ma* St. *Luke*, and St. *John.* Wherein the Sacred Tex is at large Recited, the Sence Explained, Doub Reſolved, ſeeming Contradictions Reconciled, an the Inſtructive Example of the Holy Jeſus for ou Imitation Recommended. Deſigned for the Inſtru ction of Private Families: By *William Burkitt*, M. A Vicar of *Dedham* in *Eſſex.* Fol. Price 10*s.*

Primitive Baptiſm Conſidered, in Three Parts 1. That it was Baptizing Infants as well as Adu 2. That it was Baptizing with Water, and that Standing Ordinance, and Permanent Duty. 3. Tha it was Baptizing by Pouring on or Sprinkling wit Water, not by Dipping or Immerſing into Water By *Stephen Garner* Gent.

Speedily will be Publiſhed,

A Small Tract ſhewing the Neceſſity of Attend ing the Church and the Publick Worſhip there; i a Conference or Friendly Dialogue. By a Divin of the Church of *England.* Price 2*d.* or 12*s.* a Hundred.

4175.aa.28.